



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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TRANSFORMING TENNESSEE'S FOOD PROGRAM **No Tennessee Child Should Go Hungry** *DHS AND USDA TEAM UP TO ADDRESS CHILD HUNGER*

NASHVILLE, TN— The Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA-FNS) have joined forces to find partners to join us in our quest to ensure that no Tennessee child goes hungry this summer.

Did you know that one in four children face hunger in Tennessee? During each school day, approximately 649,000 children in Tennessee participate in the free or reduced-price school lunch program. Last summer, Tennessee's Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) served approximately 42,000 children per day - clearly indicating the need to reach more children is great. We need your help to close this gap for our children.

Access to consistent healthy meals is proven to have long lasting positive impact on children's lives including: better brain functioning, reduced childhood obesity and a prevalence of healthy eating habits into adulthood. Without the availability of steady nutritious food options, children are more susceptible to health problems and poor academic performance.

The renewed partnership between DHS and USDA-FNS represents a call to action to those interested in finding solutions for the more than 80 percent of Tennessee's children who may be hungry and to reducing the rate of food insecurity across the state.



If you answer "YES!" to any of the following, you don't want to miss this amazing opportunity for transformation:



1. Do you ever worry about the more than 80% of Tennessee's children who may be hungry?
2. Are you committed to making a difference?
3. Do you want to be a part of the solution?
4. Do you believe in the capacity of others?
5. Do you want to be a part of the future celebration of reducing the rate of food insecurity in TN?



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CITIZENS PLAZA, 15TH FLOOR
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This month marks the beginning of the application cycle for the 2015 Summer Food Service Program. The SFSP is a federally funded program intended to assure that children who benefit from free and reduced price meals during the school year, have access to nutritious meals during the summer. DHS needs partners, especially in unserved and underserved areas, to help meet these needs.

“DHS is committed to maintaining momentum in our partnerships with families and partners involved in the Summer Food Service Program,” said DHS Commissioner Raquel Hatter. “We are working closely with the USDA to implement innovative strategies to increase the number of children who receive nutritious meals in the summer of 2015. This program provides important support to families. Please add your strength to this effort.”

“USDA works in every community to fight hunger and improve nutrition,” said USDA-FNS Southeast Regional Administrator Robin D. Bailey, Jr. “Research indicates children across the southeast are more vulnerable to hunger and poor nutrition especially during the summer when school is out. We have a strong partnership with DHS and we need more partners to change this outcome for children in Tennessee. No child should have the burden of worrying about where their next meal will come from ... our collective efforts in addressing this challenge will position each child to begin school next year energized and ready to learn.”

Children age 18 and under are eligible to receive meals through the SFSP. In addition, a person 19 years of age and older who has a mental or physical disability and participates during the school year in a public or private non-profit school program established for individuals with disabilities, is also eligible to receive meals.

Eligible sponsors include schools, private non-profit organizations, government entities, and non-profit residential camps. Sponsors are reimbursed on a per meal basis for meals served to eligible children and may sponsor the SFSP at one or more sites.

The criteria for sponsorship are simple and straightforward, as outlined in the USDA Administrative Guidance for Sponsors Manual. Sponsoring organizations serve meals to all children in attendance regardless of their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

There is a [mandatory online training](#) for potential sponsors, followed by SFSP workshops across the state to train new sponsors, refresh existing sponsors on program requirements, and present new requirements on federal regulations.

The deadline for new organizations to submit applications for SFSP sponsorship to the Tennessee Department of Human Services is at least 45 days prior to the anticipated start date of their program.

If your organization is interested in sponsoring the SFSP in your community, or becoming a feeding site under an existing sponsor, please contact Myra Foxworth or Pamela Norton before June 15, 2015 at (615) 313-4749; or by e-mail TNSFSP.DHS@tn.gov.

For more information on the Summer Food Service Program, please visit: <http://www.tn.gov/humanserv/sfsp/index.shtml> or <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp>.

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